

Stuff n' Such

WITH THE EXTENSION LADIES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE NO. 4

In this issue

- Getting to know your Agents
- Ten Holiday Dinner Time Savers
- Food, Family Meals & Mental Health
- Cooking Together
- Simple Meal Planning
- Christmas Traditions
- Chocolate Chip Yogurt Cookies
- Upcoming Events
- Flyers to share

Reminders

- Be sure to check our "Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Smith County" Facebook page
- Website: Smith.agrilife.org



Claudann Jones

Family and Community Health Agent
claudann.jones@ag.tamu.edu

What comes to mind when you hear that question, "Are you ready for the Holidays? Is it, "No! I am absolutely not ready?" If so, you are not the only one. It's a good thing you are reading this newsletter because we are here to help! We are devoting this edition to helping you to get ready! Or at least fake it anyway. The Holidays can bring about stress but we don't have to let it consume us to the point of not enjoying our family time. Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas as well!

Amy Shively

Better Living for Texans Agent
amy.shively@ag.tamu.edu

It is the season, the season of menu planning, shopping lists, gift lists, parties to attend, and decorations to be hung. It is the season, to also spend time with love ones, make memories and establish your own family traditions. I hope to share a few ideas to help you plan your holidays. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and a blessed Christmas!

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION
Family and Community Health



Ten Holiday Dinner Time Savers

by Claudann Jones

Here are some tips on how to save time or money — or both — and reduce the stress at mealtime.

1. Buy pre-chopped produce. Use onions or garlic often? Try buying frozen chopped onions or jarred minced garlic. This has been a saving grace for me!!

2. Prep once, use twice — or more. If you prefer to buy whole produce, think ahead when prepping it. For example, need only half an onion for tonight's dinner? Chop the whole onion, use half for tonight's meal and freeze the other half. Measure the quantity, divide into airtight freezer-friendly containers and label with the contents, the amount and the date.

3. Cook once, eat twice. Cook in quantity and freeze the extra amount or use in a different way later in the week. For example, use the remaining chicken (thighs and drumsticks) from Oven-Fried Chicken with Roasted Potato Wedges for another meal, such as Apple and Walnut Chicken Salad with Green Salad. Or use the extra chicken to replace the tuna in Mom's Tuna Pasta Casserole. Double the salsa recipe in Turkey and Bean Tostadas and use it in Tailgate Chili.

4. Buy in bulk or on sale. Buy extra of what you know your family likes and eats often, such as chicken, when it goes on sale and freeze it. Keep an eye on the sale paper as well.

5. Shop for seasonal produce. Buying what's in season can help save money.



LET IT
SNOW

Ten Holiday Dinner Time Savers

by Claudann Jones

6. Build a well-stocked pantry. This helps you easily put together a nutritious meal without having to run to the grocery store as often.

7. Substitute what you have on hand. Don't have black beans for the Turkey and Bean Tostadas? Don't stress. Use whatever beans you have in your pantry, such as pinto or kidney. Replace the almonds with pecans or walnuts, if that's what you have on hand, for the Apple Nachos.

8. Use labor-saving devices. When you are tight on time, use a slow cooker — it's one of the easiest cooking appliances to use. You simply set it and forget it. Use other kitchen tools, such as an apple slicer to quickly slice apples and a food processor to chop nuts and onions, to help ease the work.

My go to gadget has been my instant pot!

9. Make cooking a family activity. Let mealtime be a time to bring the family together. Get the kids involved.

10. Spend time now, save time later. Planning ahead can really pay off when you're juggling work, kids, school, activities and more



BE MERRY
BE MERRY

Food, Family Meals and Mental Health

by Claudann Jones

There are long-term mental health effects to eating well. When you're feeling down, healthy foods can pick you up. Research has shown that making healthy choices that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins can help keep depression at bay. Research has also shown that foods full of fat and sugar only increase the likelihood of depression and anxiety.

Good Mood Foods - "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is an adage commonly used to refer to physical health, but it's also appropriate for mental health. Eating fruits, like those in Apple Nachos, and vegetables, as in Pork Tenderloin with Greens, have been linked to greater happiness. And, because low levels of omega-3 fatty acids have been correlated to depression and impulsivity, it's important to include foods high in these good fats, such as tuna and walnuts, in your eating plan.

Eating Together - The link between good nutrition and good mental health is important for everyone, including the kids. Eating together with your family for just 20 minutes three to five times a week is all it takes to reap the benefits. Here are some tips to make the most of family time around the kitchen table: • Plan. Create a family calendar with everyone's work and activity schedules. Pick at least two days where everyone has time to join a family meal. Eating breakfast or lunch together over the weekend counts, too. • Unplug. Make the family dinner table a device-free zone — for everyone. Without these distractions, it's easier to focus on each other. Ask everyone to share something about their day. Or think of a topic or question for a conversation starter, such as: What did you do today that you really enjoyed doing? What did you have for lunch in school? What friends did you talk to today? What was the best part of your day? Or start a round of knock-knock jokes. Conversation can be silly and lighthearted, especially with kids and grandkids.



Cooking Together

by Claudann Jones

Meal planning and cooking together contribute to the well-being of the family. Benefits can include spending quality time together, doing something positive for your body, experiencing an enjoyable activity, relieving stress, learning healthy eating and building healthy habits from a young age. Plus, you'll have at least one extra pair of hands helping at mealtime, too!

Here are five ideas on how to spend quality time with your kids in the kitchen:

- Give them age-appropriate tasks. For the younger kids, ask them to help measure, stir, mash and juice citrus, for example. Older kids can separate eggs and peel fruits and vegetables.
- Make it fun. Buy or make homemade aprons for each family member and play music while cooking.
- Create teachable moments. Look for opportunities to reinforce your kids' reading, math and life skills. Ask kids to read the recipe aloud, write the shopping list and use telling time skills.
- Encourage creativity. Let the kids design a weekly family menu or family meal calendar to hang on the refrigerator. Have the little ones garnish the plates. Let them have fun and make it their own restaurant.
- Talk about what you're thankful for. Gratitude is a habit and practice that may actually help your well-being. Talk with your kids about simple ways to express gratitude.





Simple Meal Planning

By Amy Shively

If you love food and spending time with family / friends, you probably love the holidays. It can be wonderful but sometimes it can be stressful, especially if you are in charge of planning and cooking the meal. Consider making the holidays a bit simpler this year. A traditional holiday meal often includes turkey plus several sides- mashed potatoes, stuffing, green beans, yams, dinner rolls, and the list goes on! It's easy to find yourself making 5+ recipes. Not only is this a lot of work, but it can be expensive. Consider reducing the menu to: turkey (or a different meat / protein), 2-3 sides and 1 dessert. Talk with your family about what dishes they would like, so no one misses out on their favorite holiday food. If you are having guests over, consider asking them to bring a side dish as well. Whether you keep the menu simple or go all out, planning ahead can make a big difference! Instead of cooking everything the day of, think about what recipes you can make / prepare ahead of time. You may find creating a schedule of when food will be prepped cooked will help reduce stress.

Christmas Traditions

By Amy Shively

Keep the holidays fun by spending time together and creating family activities filled with fun and love! Why not create some healthy holiday traditions for your family that they can enjoy that include good nutrition, keeping active during the holidays, and promote family bonding. You want to stay rested, fueled and healthy during the holidays. Singing Christmas carols gets your family in the holiday spirit and is an opportunity to make long-lasting memories. Play a game of holiday charades. Act out or draw your favorite carols or Christmas movies. Break into teams and the winning teams get served homemade healthy cocoa. Let the kids experiment with making their own cocoa bar. Instead of stocking stuffers that include candy or sweets maybe you offer nuts in the shell or go for dark chocolate, possibly with mint or cherries, which children may find the flavor more accepting. Dark chocolate has health-promoting flavonoids. Organize a cookie swap. Try applesauce or bananas to replace a portion of the sugar. You can also substitute yogurt for part of the butter or oil, or flaxseed meal for part of the oil or eggs. Be sure to slow down and really enjoy some of your holiday favorites with kids. Sit down together and enjoy a dessert, cookie or treat mindfully. Be present to enjoy it's crunch, sweetness and flavor! Learn steps to eat with awareness.



Chocolate Chip Yogurt Cookies

Add extra calcium to your cookies with yogurt. These cookies also use whole wheat flour which adds fiber and other nutrients.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar (firmly packed)
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1/2 cup yogurt (non-fat, plain)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3/4 cup flour (all-purpose)
- 1 cup flour (whole wheat)
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips (miniature, or carob chips)

Directions

1. Heat oven to 375° F.
2. In a large bowl combine sugar, brown sugar and margarine; beat until light and fluffy.
3. Add yogurt and vanilla; blend well. Stir in flour and baking soda; mix well. Stir in chocolate chips.
4. Drop dough by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto un-greased cookie sheets. Bake at 375° F for 8 to 12 minutes or until light and golden brown.
5. Cool 1 minute, remove from cookie sheets.

Source:

Eat Smart New York!
Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Events In Smith County:

**Check out the Activities at the Glass Recreation Center
Step Up and Scale Down**

Friday, October 1,8,15,22,29

9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Call the Glass Recreation Center to Register (903) 595-7271

Walk Across Texas

Begins October 1 - November 30, 2021

Register with a team or be assigned a team

Walk and track your steps, free pedometers given to participants

Incentive Items given Each Week

Call the Glass Recreation Center to Register (903) 595-7271

Check out the Activities at the Tyler Senior Center

Nov.9, Nov. 23, and Dec. 7 from 12:00 - 1:00

Check out the activities at Green Acres Baptist Church Family Life Center

Walk N' Talk

**Walking and track your steps with your free pedometer and short nutrition
lesson**

Incentive items given weekly

Begins October 6 - Nov. 24, 2021

9:00 - 10:00

Call Green Acres Baptist Church to Register (903) 525-1116

Check out the Activities at Lillie Russell Memorial Library

Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

Begins October 7 - November Nov. 18, 2021 (no program on Veterans Day)

11:00 - 12:00 pm

Adult gardening program, Incentive items given weekly



FROM

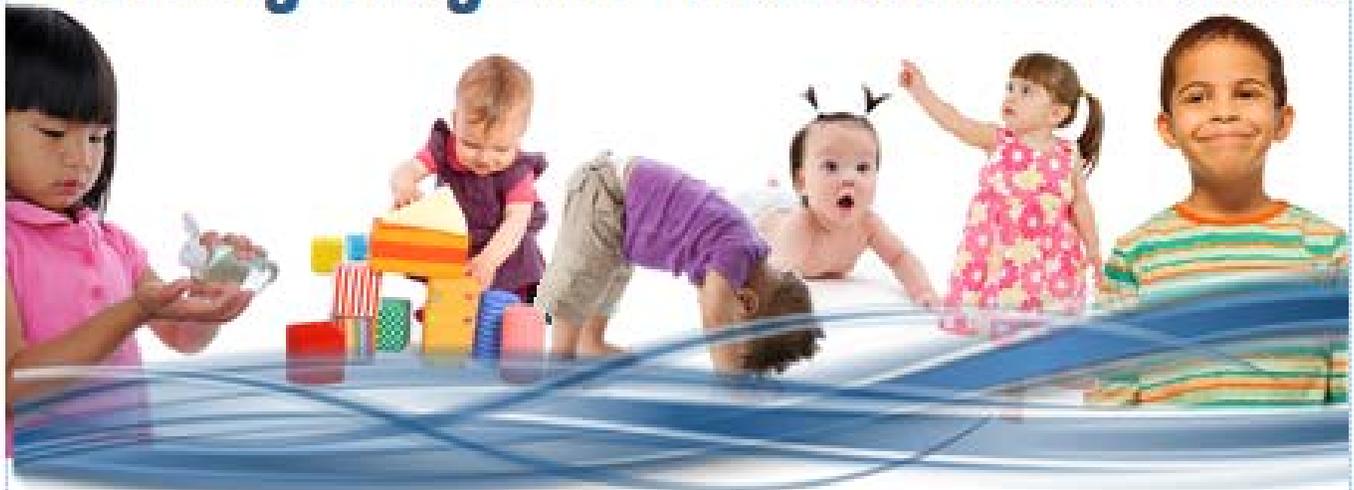


superior
healthplan.

Early Childhood Educator Training Program

2021 MONTHLY

Virtual Mini-Conference Series



SAVE THE DATES

January 30th

July 10th

February 20th

August 7th

March 27th

September 18th

April 17th

October 9th

May 15th

November 13th

June 26th

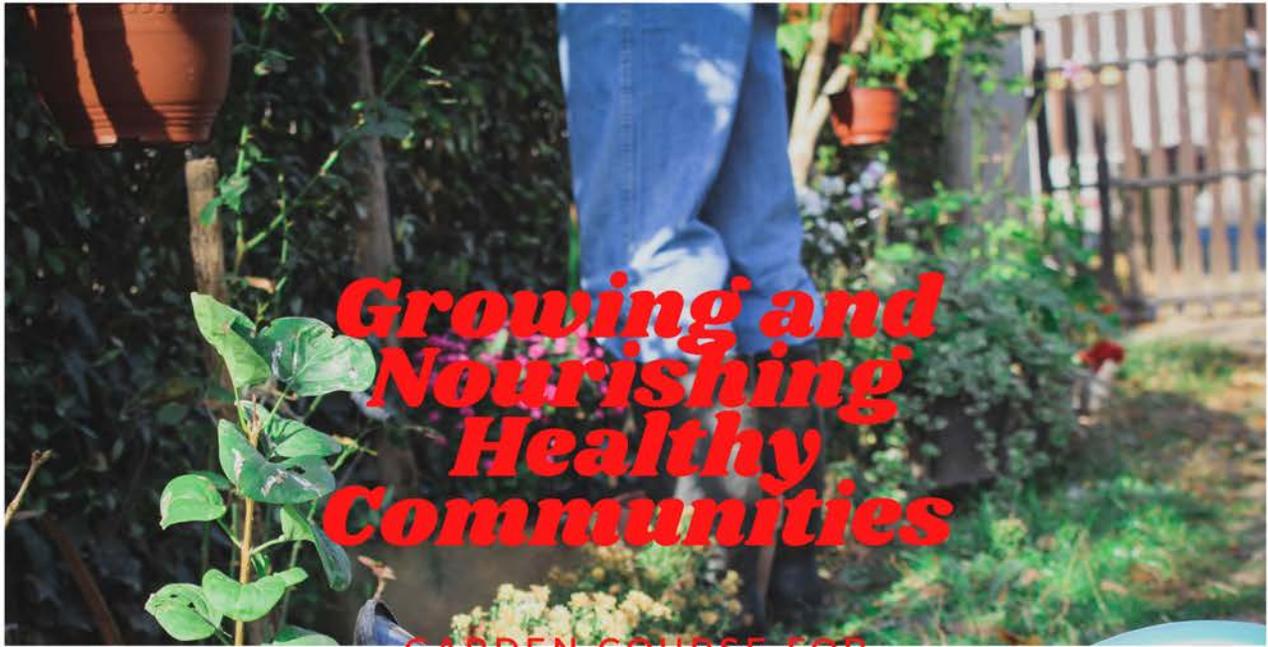
December 4th

TIME: 9AM-12PM Central via Microsoft Teams

COST: \$25 each

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to accomplish full and equal employment opportunity through our Texas A&M AgriLife.

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION



Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities

GARDEN COURSE FOR
ADULTS

Date: Oct. 7 - Nov. 18, 2021

Time: 11:00 - 12:00

Location: Lillie Russell Memorial Library

Come find your green thumb with us! People who take this course enjoy:

Spending time with family and friends,

Learning the tips and tricks of gardening,

Eating the fresh and delicious produce they grew!

This 6-week series includes topics on how to build, maintain, and harvest a garden!

For registration contact: Lillie Russell Memorial Library

(903) 882-1900

Presented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Better Living for Texans

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP. The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Court of Texas Cooperating.*



Walk Across Texas!

Take the Challenge: October 1 – Nov. 30, 2021

For more information visit: Glass Recreation Center, (903) 595-7271

How to Participate: Team of 8, walks 833 miles over 8 weeks

Team of 8 – (worksites, friends, church groups, family members, sorority, fraternity organizations). Choose a team captain, register the team with Gaylen Pierce and report miles weekly.

If you sign up as a team captain, we will have a captains meeting on Sept. 21st at 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. at the Glass Recreation Center to go over any questions you may have.

It's More Than Walking:

Dancing, Gardening, Home Activities, Sports, Cycling, Exercise (any sort of activity where you are moving and physically active).

What counts as a mile:

2,000 steps is one mile using a pedometer, Fitbit, Apple Watch or cell phone device

Measured mile at a track, walking trail, or treadmill, etc.

20 minutes of continuous exercise.

All participants receive free pedometers and a weekly incentive item!!!

This program is FREE!!

Texas A&M AgriLife provides equal opportunity in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status



WALK N' TALK

Walk N' Talk is an 8-week series, with weekly lessons featuring recipes where a new fruit or vegetable will be highlighted, and a walking session each week.

Take a Walk with Us! During this Walk N' Talk Series, Friends, Family and others from the Community come together to support one another in a fun, simple way.

Who: Anyone who has a membership to GABC Family Life Center, or you may register for a membership

Where: Green Acres Baptist Church Family Life Center

When: Starts October 6 - Nov. 24, 2021
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Receive a pedometer and weekly incentive items. Register at GABC Family Life Center

(903) 525-1116

All Classes are FREE!!!

Provided by A&M AgriLife and Smith County
Extension

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION



The material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP.
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in all programs and services to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or marital status. We will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunities for all.



BE WELL, LIVE WELL

A Program on Healthy Aging

JOIN US FOR A **FOUR-PART SERIES** ON HEALTHY AGING
FREE FOR ALL—NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED!

Tuesdays This Fall at 12:00 p.m. | SEE DATES BELOW

LEARN HOW TO

- Reduce your risk for disease • Engage in a healthy lifestyle •
- Increase your cognition • Enhance your physical abilities •

Oct. 12 | *Be Independent, Eat Well*
Learn which nutrients you need more of as you age, how to support cognition through food, and more!

Nov. 9 | *Be Able, Read the Label*
Find out how to use the nutrition facts label as a tool to help you maintain a healthy eating pattern.

Nov. 23 | *Be Safe, Eat Safe*
Learn how to keep food safe while shopping, how to interpret dates on food packages, safe food storage practices, and more!

Dec. 7 | *Be Creative, Plan Meals*
Find Solutions to eating alone and learn how to plan meals for small households.

- AND -

Be Fit, Move More
Learn the benefits of physical activity as you age and ideas to include physical activity in your daily life.

MEETS AT TYLER SENIOR CENTER

1915 Garden Valley Road

Tyler, TX 75702

903.597.0781

Or contact:

Amy Shively
Better Living for Texans Agent
903.590.2980
amy.shively@ag.tamu.edu



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.



STEP UP AND SCALE DOWN

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Smith County invites you to attend Step Up and Scale Down. An innovative 8-week program designed to guide participants toward weight management and chronic disease management through the use of nutrition tips, prevention, exercise and delicious food demonstrations.

Step Up and Scale Down is a research-based program that has proven success in weight management and building healthy lifestyle habits.

Classes will be held at the Glass Recreation Center located on 501 W 32nd St, Tyler, Tx 75702.

Classes will be held weekly starting Friday, October 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and will end on Friday, November 19.

For more information and to register, contact the Glass Rec Center at 903-595-7271.

